

based on the success Whitney, Cassandra, Kelli, and Michella have already achieved. I know my fellow Senators join me in wishing them the best of luck in their future endeavors.

#### SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the 2008 Annual Report of the Select Committee on Ethics.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

#### ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2008—SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

The Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007 (the "Act") calls for the Select Committee on Ethics of the United States Senate to issue an annual report no later than January 31 of each year providing information in certain categories describing its activities for the preceding year. Reported below is the information describing the Committee's activities in 2008 in the categories set forth in the Act:

(1) The number of alleged violations of Senate rules received, from any source [in 2008], including the number raised by a Senator or staff of the Committee: 85. (This figure does not include 13 alleged violations from the previous year carried into 2008.)

(2) The number of alleged violations that were dismissed—

(A) For lack of subject matter jurisdiction or in which, even if the allegations in the complaint are true, no violation of Senate rules would exist: 52. (This figure includes 5 matters originating in the previous year.)

(B) Because they failed to provide sufficient facts as to any material violation of the Senate rules beyond mere allegation or assertion: 21. (This figure includes 4 matters originating in the previous year.)

(3) The number of alleged violations in which the Committee staff conducted a preliminary inquiry: 10. (This figure includes 4 matters from the previous year carried into 2008.)

(4) The number of alleged violations that resulted in an adjudicatory review: 0.

(5) The number of alleged violations that the Committee dismissed for lack of substantial merit: 4. (This figure includes 1 matter from the previous year carried into 2008.)

(6) The number of private letters of admonition or public letters of admonition issued: 2.

(7) The number of matters resulting in a disciplinary sanction: 0.

(8) Any other information deemed by the Committee to be appropriate to describe its activities in the previous year.

Between January 4 and February 25, 2008 the Committee staff conducted mandatory ethics training for all Senate employees: 8 training sessions for Members, 19 training sessions for staff, and 1 training session for Member spouses. In addition, the Committee conducted 11 new employee training sessions during the year; 17 ethics seminars for Member DC offices, state offices, Senate committees, and outside delegations; 2 mandatory campaign related ethics briefings; and 1 Senator-elect orientation session and 1 training session for transition staff.

In 2008, Committee staff handled 15,555 telephone inquiries for ethics advice and guidance.

In 2008, the Committee wrote 1,264 ethics advisory letters and responses, including 869 advisories concerning gifts or travel.

The Committee issued 3,395 letters concerning financial disclosure filings by Sen-

ators, Senate staff and Senate candidates and reviewed 1,510 reports.

#### HOLDER NOMINATION

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I believe I am speaking on behalf of Americans who value their second amendment personal right to own their own firearms. I also believe I am speaking on behalf of Americans who favor justice over political patronage. Finally, I believe I am speaking on behalf of Americans who realize we are in a war on terror and want to continue the strong efforts to bring terrorists to justice. I am opposed to the appointment of Eric Holder to be the next Attorney General of the United States.

I take particular interest in this nomination because I, as well as the voters of the State of Oklahoma, feel strongly that the rights conferred upon us by the second amendment of the Constitution guarantee an individual freedom that no government regulation can take away. Eric Holder's record and his true beliefs about the second amendment are clear. In a brief filed in the Heller case, Holder joined other past Department of Justice officials by saying: "[t]he Second Amendment Does Not Protect Firearms Possession or Use That Is Unrelated To Participation In a Well-Regulated Militia." The brief also stated that the "recognition of an expansive individual right to keep and bear arms for private purposes will make it more difficult for the government to defend present and future firearms laws." During his confirmation hearing, Eric Holder noted the importance of the Heller decision and recognized it as precedent. But I certainly do not believe that the decision in Heller has changed the underlying beliefs held by Eric Holder, and his leadership as the chief lawyer of the United States will be a detriment to the gun ownership rights of American citizens.

I am also very uncomfortable with Mr. Holder's judgment and record on pardons and clemency during the Clinton administration. He apparently chose to circumvent the standard process by which all pardons are considered and granted, and clouded this process with the appearance of impropriety. If the pardon of Mark Rich was not impropriety, and I believe it was, then it was at the very least extreme negligence, and such negligence has no place in any level of government. Mark Rich, whom many label a tax evader, is in fact even more than that. Rich was indicted in 1983 on 65 counts of not only tax evasion, but also fraud, racketeering, and trading with the enemy. Rich fled to Switzerland before he could stand trial, which is perhaps the most egregious element of this case—he was a fugitive and a regular fixture on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted List. How can one justify recommending a pardon, bypass the Department of Justice and the hundreds of individuals who worked to bring Mark Rich to justice, when the man who is being par-

doned is not even willing to face the same justice system to which every other American must answer? In fact, Holder admitted during his confirmation hearing that he did not adequately acquaint himself with the facts of the case. The United States Senate should not allow such injustice to go unanswered.

Equally egregious, Holder was Deputy Attorney General in an administration which granted clemency to 16 members of the Armed Forces of National Liberation, or FALN. This is a group which not only carried out violent protests, FALN set off bombs several times in New York City and Chicago and were convicted for conspiracies to commit robbery, bomb-making, and sedition. The Clinton administration granted clemency despite opposition from the U.S. Attorney's Office, FBI, and most importantly, the victims of FALN terrorist activities.

Finally, we continue to be in a war on terror, however, Holder is an individual who is opposed to the military commissions which have tried terrorists and is opposed to the Guantanamo Bay detention facility for detaining terrorists. This Senate and the American people should know that since October 2001, the U.S. has detained almost 800 al-Qaida and Taliban combatants at GTMO. Currently, 60 more are ready for transfer or release to another country, 70 have either been tried or in process, and 130 are a high threat to the U.S. Since 2002, more than 525 detainees have departed GTMO for other countries. Today, there are approximately 240 detainees at GTMO. If GTMO is no longer a prison, some U.S. domestic or overseas prison will have to house these men while they await a habeas hearing and trial. All the while, the military detention facilities at GTMO meet the highest international standards. The Pentagon spends \$2.5 million each year on Korans, prayer rugs, and special meals for prisoners. There are on average two lawyers for every detainee at GTMO. He believes our military commissions currently in place would have to be substantially revamped and even holds the position that U.S. interrogation techniques should be published for the world to see.

For at least these reasons, I cannot vote to support the nomination of an individual who holds opinions on a wide range of issues which I find so objectionable and objectionable to my constituents. I will be voting a definitive no on the Holder nomination.

#### CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I wish to express my optimism that with a new administration and a new Congress, we will finally be able to achieve what was left unfinished last year: the expansion of the Children's Health Insurance Program. Though we are in difficult economic times, we can

never afford to squander our Nation's most precious resource—our children.

From 1994 to 2000 I served as the State of Florida's elected treasurer and insurance commissioner. During my tenure, I oversaw the implementation of the SCHIP program, or the Healthy Kids Program, as it is known in Florida. There is no doubt in my mind that this program works. Nationwide, in 1997 23.3 percent of low-income children were uninsured. By 2006, this number had dropped to 15.4 percent.

However, much remains to be done. The rate of uninsured children in Florida is nearly 19 percent—the second worst in the country. Around 8.6 million children in America are uninsured; nearly 900,000 of these children are in Florida. One of the reasons I support this bill so strongly is that it expands coverage and offers incentives for States like Florida to find and enroll uncovered children. During difficult economic times such as these, there are more children in need of the CHIP program, not fewer.

While I am very satisfied with the progress this legislation would make in covering children, I do have concerns about its financing. I want to emphasize that increasing the tobacco tax is an appropriate funding mechanism for this legislation. It will have significant positive impacts on health, save untold millions in health care costs, and reduce the prevalence of smoking among the children whom this bill is designed to protect. However, I am concerned that the tax is applied unequally across different tobacco products.

Under the current legislation, there is a much higher tax increase for large cigars than for other tobacco products. This is no small problem for Florida—90 percent of large cigars in the U.S. are either manufactured or imported through Florida, accounting for approximately 3,000 jobs. While I remain opposed to placing an unfair tax burden on any one product, I still feel we have a strong bill on the whole, one that will improve health care dramatically for America's children.

#### IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering well over 1,200, are heartbreaking and touching. While energy prices have dropped in recent weeks, the concerns expressed remain very relevant. To respect the efforts of those who took the opportunity to share their thoughts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses,

but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

You are asking Idahoans to write about gas prices? You mean you do not know? I think Washington D.C. may as well be registered as another planet because I think your colleagues are so far from reality of the rest of the people it is absolutely outrageous.

[Some of] your colleagues [suggest that] Americans use alternative [modes] of transportation and that it is a good thing that gas prices force people to take the bus, ride bikes, or walk to their destination because it helps reduce global warming.

I have something [for you to share with your colleagues]:

I am a driver for a living. I deliver products right here in Boise. I have to drive I have no choice. I am also a salesman, and a night supervisor. I live in Idaho. I do not have the option of riding the bus. I cannot walk my deliveries or ride my bike with my products.

I find it absolutely insulting [to think this suggestion can be taken seriously. Too many liberals] love these high gas prices because they want to use it as an excuse to make us live how they want us to live to fight so-called global warming, while [they make no sacrifices in their own personal travel behaviors.] That is eco-socialism in my opinion.

Senator Crapo, I have three jobs!! Three jobs, and I am still having problems fueling up. I have had to open credit card accounts for the first time in my life, and my debt is still going up!

You would think with three jobs and three paychecks for one person! I am not married, no kids. I would be starving with fuel prices if I had a family. I am just barely paying my bills on time as they are, to about \$1,500 a month, not including gas prices!

Starting in 2005 till 2007, I did very well financially. I was saving up and putting money away in my savings account. I loved myself for putting money away. This month [June 2008], I had to take one-quarter of my life savings out of my bank to pay for bills, including gas because the price skyrocketed from \$3 to \$4 a gallon in one month. This is outrageous!

I think it is 80 percent the government's fault for this and 20 percent the oil companies. The only thing the oil companies are doing wrong is speculating the price of oil for really dumb reasons.

Congress has done this because [legislation to drill for oil in ANWR has been blocked because of environmental concerns that do not exist.] Congress is more worried about a stupid deer than they are about [the lives of Americans]? More worried about the mating season of the caribou than they are about the economy? My jobs? My gas prices? My bills? My lifestyle?

You will not allow drilling off shore? Well, did you know that China is drilling for oil off the coast of Florida? But we cannot. Why? This is outrageous!

Do not listen to those radical environmentalists. They were wrong about the second Ice Age in the 70s. When I was kid in school in the 1980s, my teachers told me by the year 1999, New York would be underwater and Los Angeles would be a bunch of Islands. It has not happened. Of course, the earth's temperature changes and jumps over time. The earth's climate changes all the time, has been since the earth cooled and formed. The

earth's temperature does not stay the same all the time. There are so many scientists and people who disagree with Al Gore, but if we disagree, we are labeled "flat-earthers" and "Holocaust Deniers."

My question [for conservatives] is this. Why did you not approve drilling for oil when you [controlled Congress and the White House]?

You want to help me? A person with three jobs and struggling with gas prices? I have not had a vacation since March of 2007. I cannot even take a one-day vacation to Jackpot anymore. I work all seven days a week, get no weekends and I still struggle to pay gas prices of about \$15 a day, not a week, a day!

Drill here, drill in ANWR, drill in America!

AARON, Boise.

Thank you, Senator, for your sincere concern for Idaho residents. I am 58 next month and on disability from a very severe fire I was trapped in several years ago. Though I do get an income, this is where it goes:

1. I receive \$625 a month.
2. \$200 a month mobile home space rent.
3. \$156 a month mortgage payments for my mobile home . . . which without the owner of the mobile home, I would not be on my way to being a first time home owner!
4. \$48 a month mobile home insurance.
5. \$40 a month vehicle insurance . . . it is a 1988 Plymouth Voyager van that I have had since 1988.
6. \$39 phone bill, which was supposed to reduced several months ago through my social worker, and still remains at the normal price and I do not have long distance.
7. \$30-40 electricity monthly; I do not have an air conditioner for summer but do open my windows and use my ceiling fans that helps.

\$125 and up in winter for gas to run my heater monthly. That is after I receive fuel assistance which for some reason only lasts 1-2 months and only use the heater to warm up the area so can start my wood stove which is usually one-half hour.

So, if I am lucky, all I can afford to do is put up to \$20 a month in gas, which gives me almost 1/4 tank and that has to last the month. I have medical problems that mean many trips to the doctor and pharmacy, and with such a low amount of gas I have to depend on others for rides when I run out of gas. Thank you for your sincere concern and we are all hoping and praying that gas will once again come down to where people like me can afford to purchase more.

LORETTA, Nampa.

From your letter on gas prices that you sent me, you are starting to understand that the Congress holds most of the blame for high oil (and thus gas) prices. Congress has failed to act in the thirty years since the last gas crisis, continually failing to take responsible action to make sure domestic supplies are developed and used to reduce dependence on foreign oil.

It should be clear that the single most deleterious action of Congress over the last forty years was the Environmental Protection Act. It has desperately needed revision since the early seventies and because it was not, the economic impact on America has been extreme. The inability to build domestic gas refineries, increase domestic oil production and take advantage of resources in ANWR are only a few of the unintended and disastrous impacts of that act. An environmentalist has only to write a single letter to cause the price of any such proposal to escalate exponentially. The latest case of the proposed nuclear reactor in Idaho is an example. One man writing one letter can cause the waste of hundreds of thousands of dollars to "prove" the lack of environmental